

## Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 PANAMA 02497 071702Z  
ACTION ARA-06

INFO OCT-01 SS-14 ISO-00 NEA-04 H-03 INR-05 CIAE-00  
NSC-05 NSCE-00 PRS-01 PA-01 SP-02 IO-06 DODE-00  
L-01 PM-03 /052 W  
-----080541Z 104441 /14

R 071530Z APR 77  
FM AMEMBASSY PANAMA  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1415

CONFIDENTIAL PANAMA 2497

LIMDIS

EO 11652: GDS  
TAGS: PFOR, PN, LY  
SUBJECT: LIBYA VISIT

REF: (A) PANAMA 1993; (B) PANAMA 2267; (C) PANAMA 2472

1. WE HAVE BEEN TRYING, IN A LOW-KEY WAY, TO ENCOURAGE RESTRAINT UPON THE PANAMANIAN GOVERNMENT AS THE LIBYA TRIP APPROACHES. WE HAVE DISCUSSED WITH SEVERAL INFLUENTIAL PANAMANIANS THE PITFALLS OF GOP INVOLVEMENT IN THE MIDEAST PROBLEM. OUR EMPHASIS HAS BEEN ON THE POTENTIAL FOR DAMAGE TO PANAMA'S CAUSE IN THE U.S.

2. THE AMBASSADOR RAISED OUR CONCERN WITH CARLOS OZORES, VICE MINISTER OF FOREIGN RELATIONS, APRIL 6. HE ESPECIALLY REFERRED TO CONGRESSIONAL ATTITUDES AND THE IMPACT SUCH VENTURES AS A MILITARY AGREEMENT MIGHT HAVE. THE AMBASSADOR ALSO PLANS TO MENTION THE MATTER TO FOREIGN MINISTER GONZALEZ REVILLA, WHO WILL REMAIN IN PANAMA BUT WILL DOUBTLESS BE IN TOUCH WITH TORRIJOS IN THE DAYS AHEAD.

3. AMONG OTHERS WITH WHOM EMBASSY OFFICERS HAVE TALKED WAS TV-2'S MARIO VELASQUEZ, TORRIJOS' FAVORITE NEWSMAN.  
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VELASQUEZ SOON AFTER THIS CONVERSATION GAVE SOME VERY MODERATE BUT CAUTIONARY ADVICE TO THE GENERAL IN A TV COMMENTARY: NAMELY, TO STAY OUT OF "THAT HORNET'S NEST WHICH IS THE MIDDLE EAST" CONFLICT. "I BELIEVE THAT IN THE INTERESTS OF PANAMA, TORRIJOS WILL HAVE TO PROCEED VERY CAUTIOUSLY WHEN IT COMES TO ISSUING JOINT STATEMENTS OR COMMUNIQUE," HE SAID. VELASQUEZ

ALSO ADVISED "THAT WE SHOULD NOT DO ANYTHING THAT COULD IRRITATE THOSE POWERFUL AND INFLUENTIAL JEWISH-AMERICAN SECTORS" WHOSE OPPOSITION COULD MAKE OBTAINING A NEW CANAL TREATY "EXTREMELY DIFFICULT" (SEE FBIS/PANAMA PA051525Y).

4. EMBASSY OFFICERS HAVE ALSO ENCOURAGED DR. HESZEL KLEPFISZ, LEADER OF THE LOCAL JEWISH COMMUNITY, TO USE HIS CONSIDERABLE INFLUENCE TO CAUTION AGAINST ANY RADICAL CHANGE IN GOP MIDEAST POLICY. HE HAS TALKED TO SEVERAL INFLUENTIAL PANAMANIAN, INCLUDING SOME WHO WILL BE IN LIBYA WITH TORRIJOS. OF PARTICULAR INTEREST, KLEPFISZ CALLED ON ROMULO ESCOBAR BETHANCOURT, WHO AFTER TWO AND A HALF HOURS OF HEATED DISCUSSION SOLEMNLY "GUARANTEED" THAT HE WOULD PERSONALLY PERSUADE TORRIJOS NOT TO TAKE ANY ACTION PREJUDICIAL TO ISRAEL. (KLEPFISZ SAID HE DREW HEAVILY ON HIS CONVERSATIONS IN PANAMA WITH SENATOR JAVITS AND REPS. SOLARZ, SCHEUER AND GILMAN OVER THE PAST YEAR OR SO.)

5. IN OUR QUIET CAMPAIGN, WE HAVE ALSO KEPT IN TOUCH WITH THE ISRAELI AMBASSADOR.

JORDEN

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NNN

## Message Attributes

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**Disposition Comment:** 25 YEAR REVIEW  
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**Review Markings:**  
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